

\$28 million in new and retained sales  
\$48 million in new investments  
128 jobs created or retained

**Dakota MEP** is committed to maximizing enterprise performance. They provide companies with services and access to public and private resources that enhance growth, improve productivity, and expand capacity. Dakota MEP works with companies willing to invest in their future, to make improvements in the short term, and to position themselves to be long-term competitors both domestically and internationally.

Dakota MEP is a leadership organization that provides value to those companies dedicated to creating new opportunities for their people and organization<sup>1</sup>. They strive to maximize enterprise performance - including growth, innovation, productivity and profitability. Working with partners who share this mission - they specialize in helping companies develop best practices and supporting strategies which enable them to better compete today and tomorrow.

For more information, contact:



Randy Schwartz, Director  
1929 North Washington St, Suite M  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501  
(701) 328-5476  
[dakotamep.com](http://dakotamep.com)



\* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in Federal FY2009

# CLIENT SUCCESS: CUSTOM GRAPHICS, INC.

*“Attending the Lean Enterprise Certification Program gave me a new outlook into our processes and the amount of waste that arises from things as simple as organization and 5S. It has given our company a great motivation to improve our processes in order to better service our customer and reduce our manufacturing costs”*

Zach Paxton  
General Manager

## Custom Graphics, Inc. Accommodates Growth Through Lean

Custom Graphics, Inc., is a leading commercial screen printer and digital printing company specializing in custom decals, overlays and vehicle markings. A large part of the business is providing decals to several large agricultural equipment manufacturers, and decals, signage and coroplast signs to franchised businesses. The company services clients in the U.S. and several European countries. Custom Graphics, Inc., employs 35 people at its facility in Fargo, North Dakota.

### Situation:

Custom Graphics General Manager, Zach Paxton, had first been exposed to the North Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Dakota MEP) in 2006 through a “21st Century Marketing” seminar he attended. Paxton later became interested in Lean and contacted Dakota MEP for assistance.

### Solution:

Paxton enrolled in the Lean

Enterprise Certification Program (LECP) offered by Dakota MEP which included 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)/Visual Factory and Standardized Work postings. The LECP participants took part in a quick changeover Kaizen in his company and were able to offer several suggestions for improvement. “It was an interesting experience to have a group come in and watch our processes,” said Paxton. “Most of them had no idea about screen printing; they were objective and helpful.” Paxton said one solid idea coming from the experience was using multiple-shelf rolling carts to transport work into the shop. As a result of the Dakota MEP training and Kaizen activity, Custom Graphics was able to accommodate a 20 percent growth in sales without having to add new employees.

### Results:

- \* Increased sales by 20 percent.
- \* Estimated cost savings of \$65,000.

Increased sales  
by 20%